

# **A Comprehensive Approach to Language Access in Montgomery County**

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Community Partnerships**

# Montgomery County Today

## --An “Edge Gateway” for Immigrants

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Transformation from a white, middle-class, bedroom community into a diverse mix of multiethnic clusters in a matter of a generation:

- Close to half (45%) of MD’s immigrants live in MoCo
- More foreign-born (30%) than native Maryland-born (23%) residents
- About half are newcomers since 1990
- 1 in 3 speaks another language at home (35%)
- 1 in 7 is LEP (14.2%)

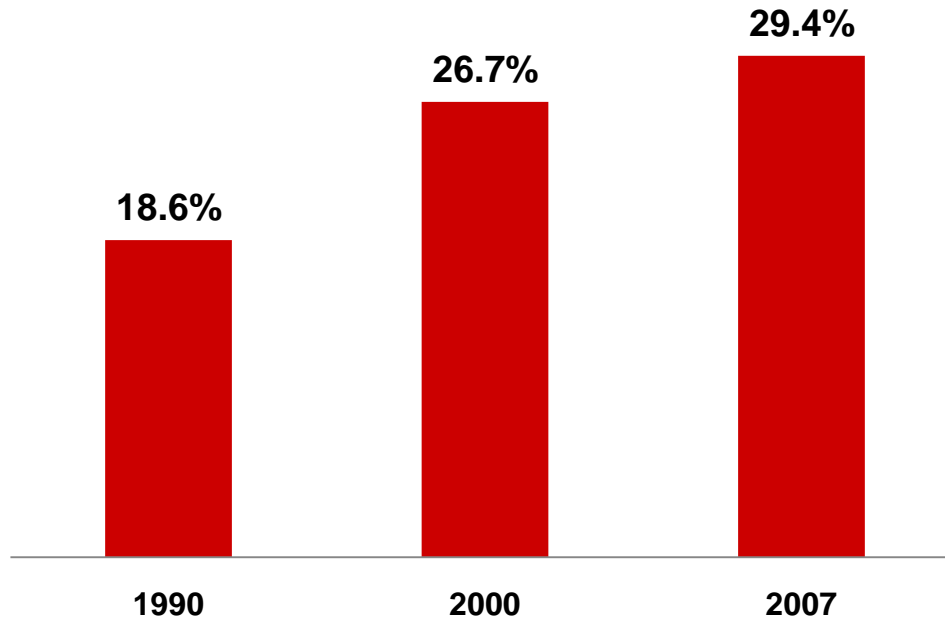


\* An edge gateway is a suburban district new to immigrants but now has at least 30% foreign born population.



# Foreign-born Population

## --Growth Trends



Foreign born Population  
Nearly doubled since 1990

1990	140,000
2000	232,996
2007	272,000

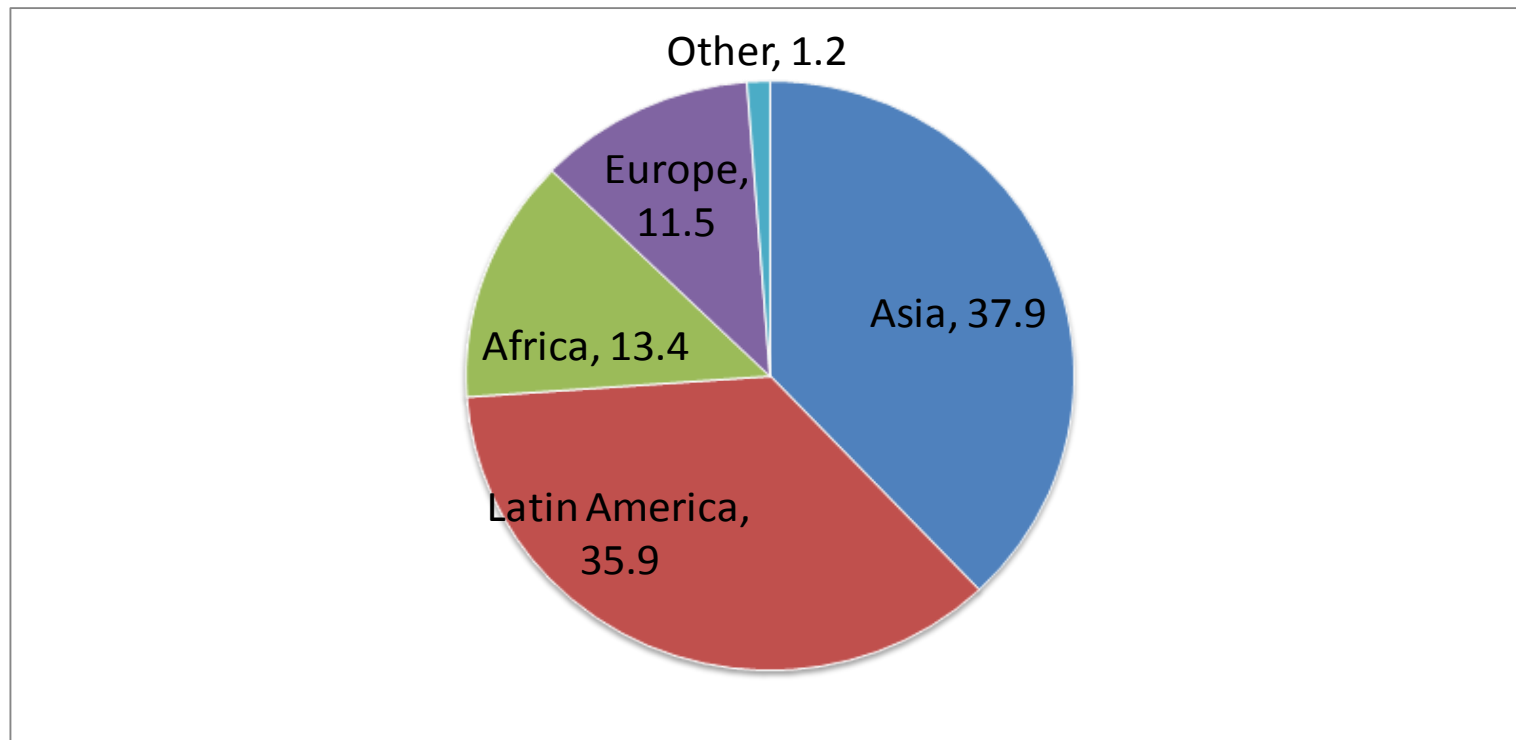
Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census



# Foreign-born Population

## --Countries of Origin

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Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007, U.S. Census

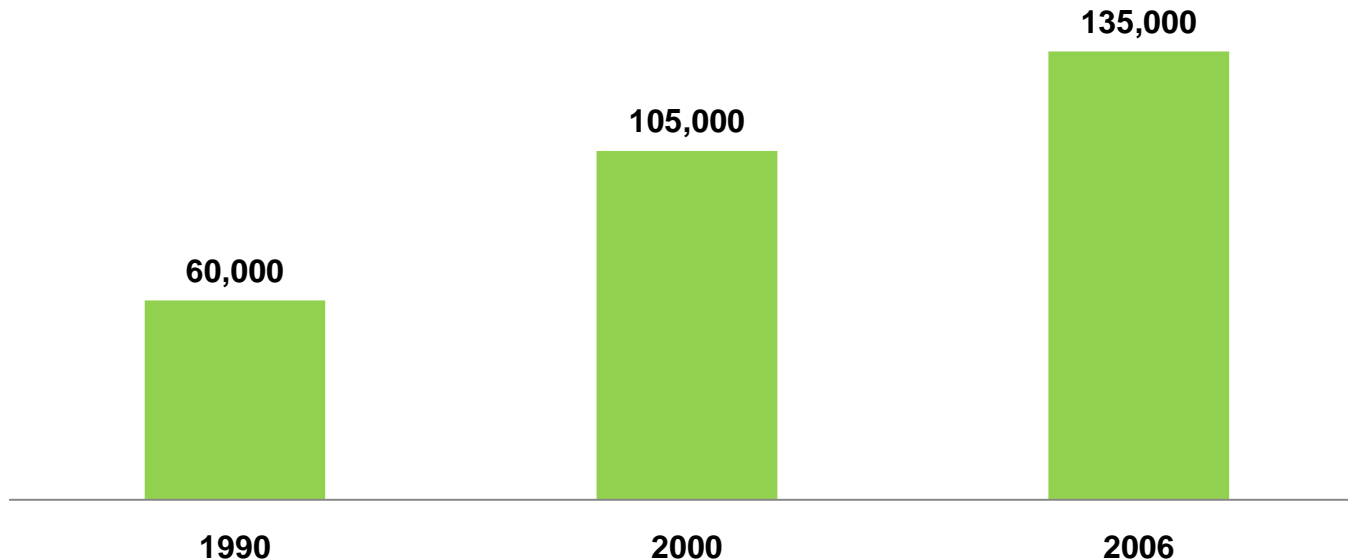


# LEP Population

## —More than Doubled Since 1990

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### LEP Population Growth in Montgomery County



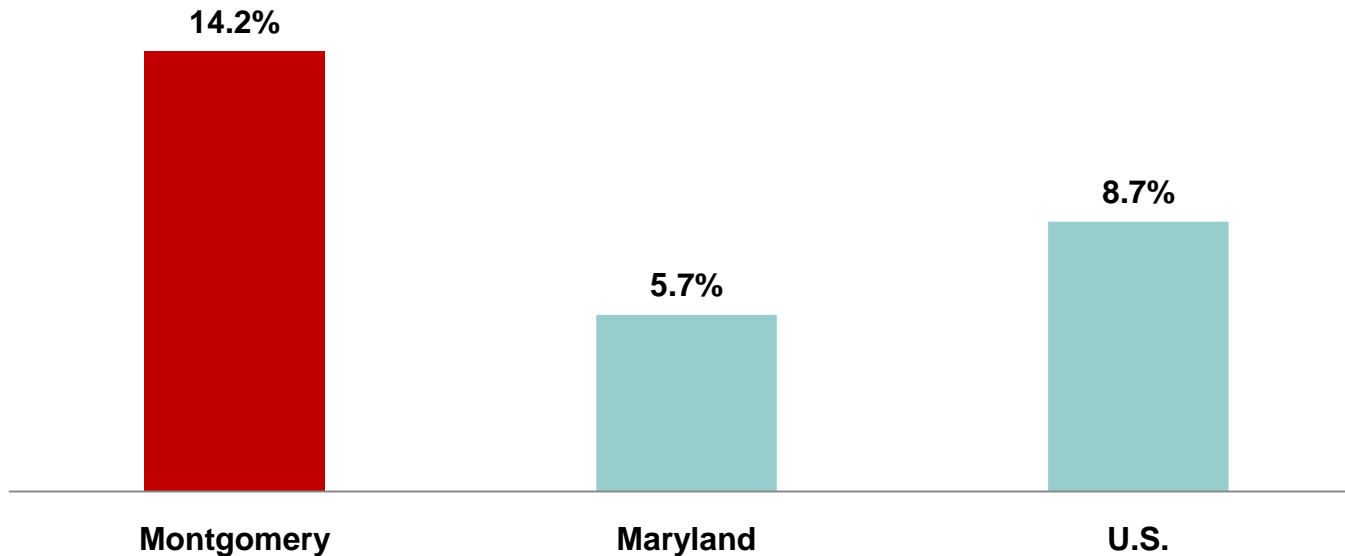
Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2006



# LEP Population

**—Higher than National or State Average**

Percentage of LEP Population Comparison  
(2006)



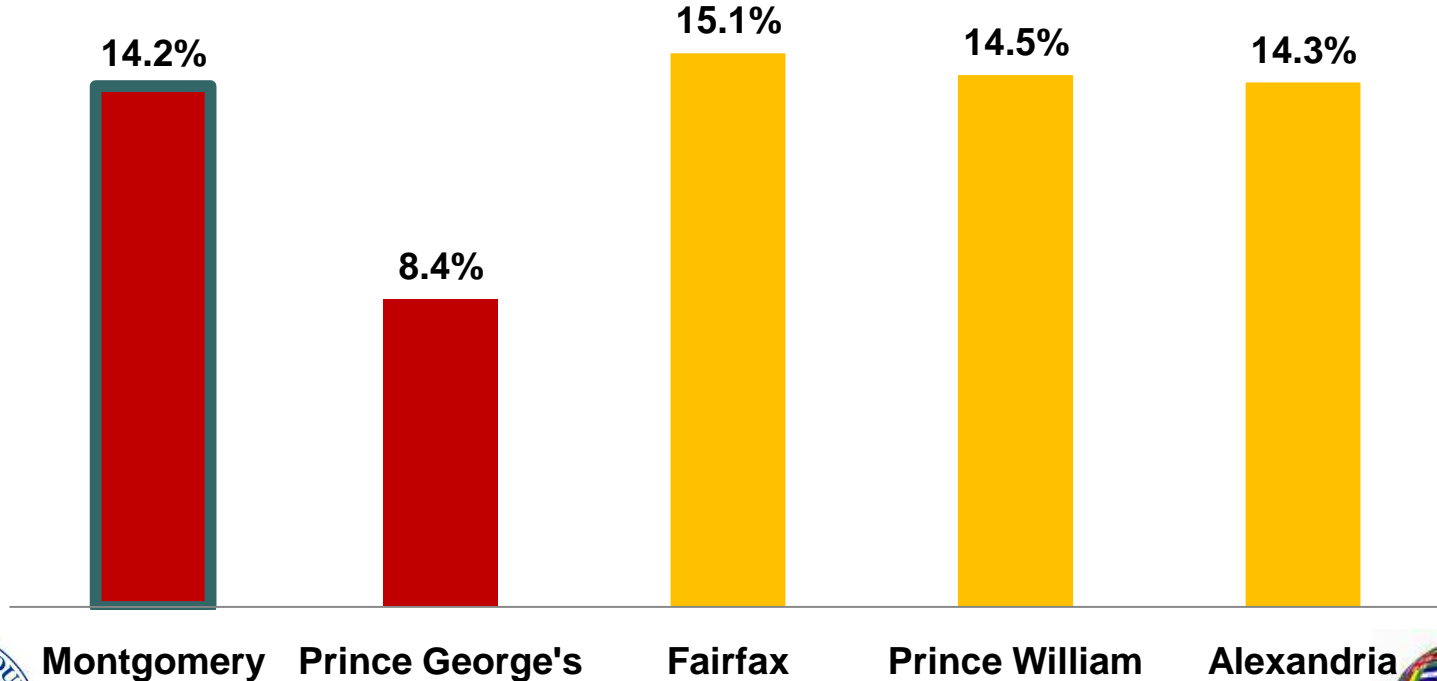
Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2006



# LEP Population

## —**Not Unique** among Capital Region Counties

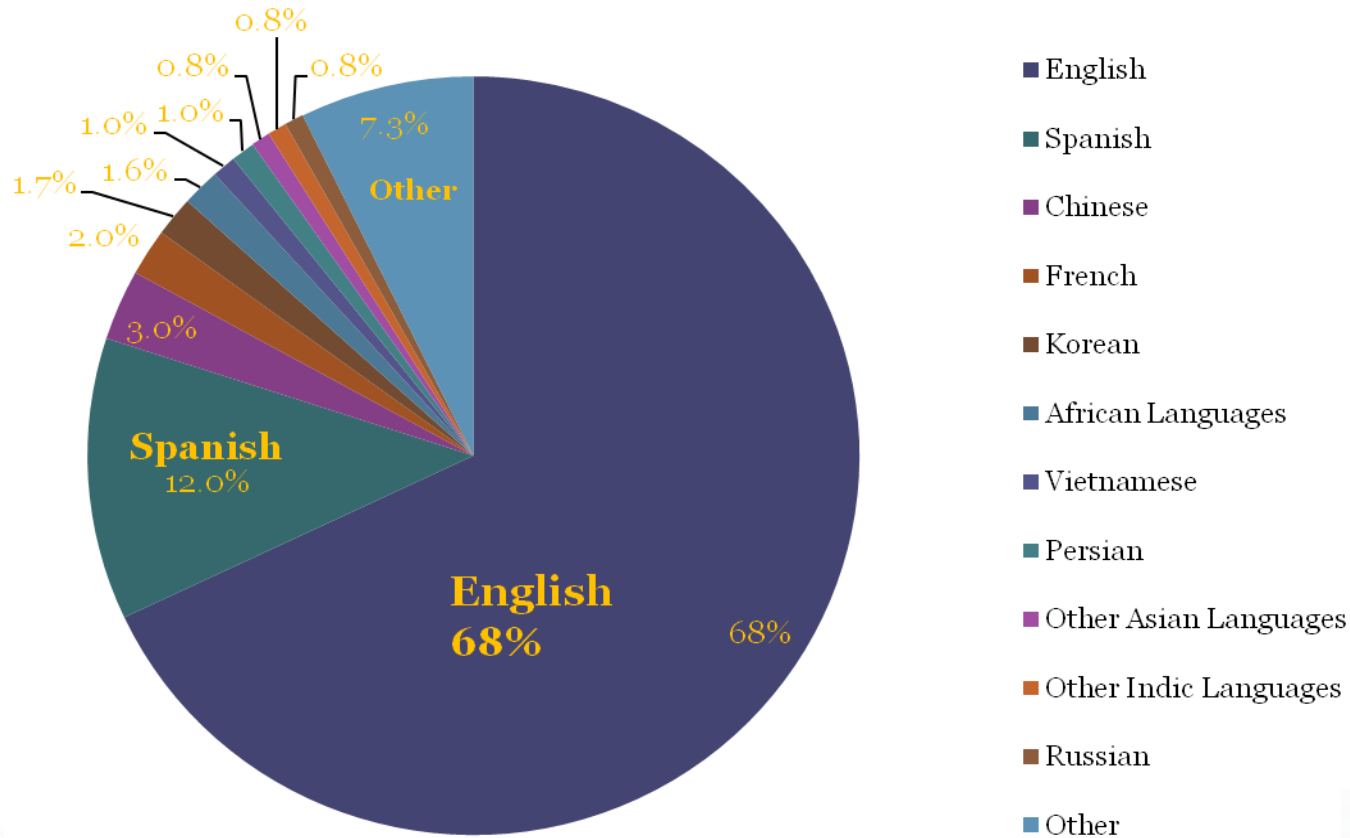
LEP Population in Capital Region Counties (2006)



Source: American Community Survey 2006, U.S. Census Bureau



# Language Diversity in MoCo

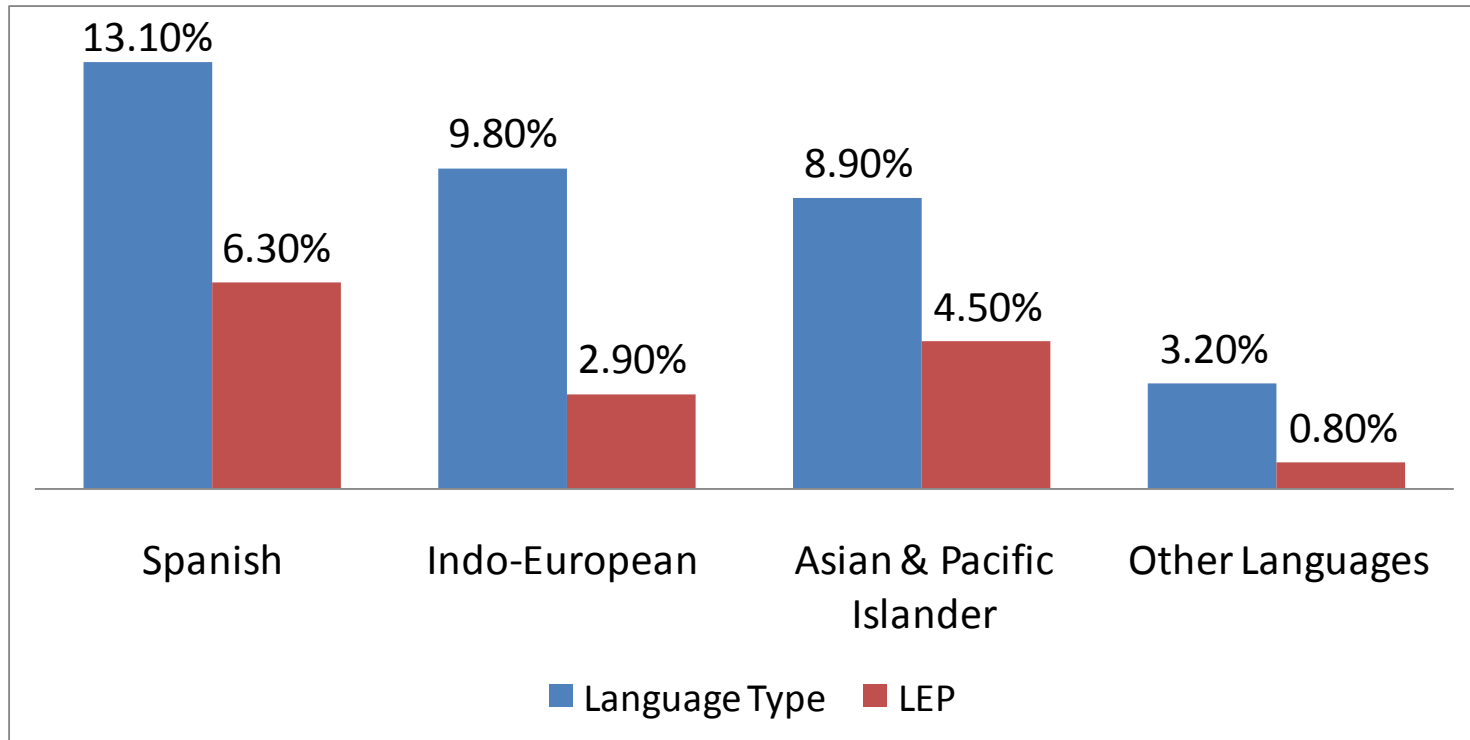


Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau 2000





# LEP by Language Categories



Source: American Community Survey 2005-2007, U.S. Census



# Responding to Changes...

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- Service providers of all sectors are paying attention to language access:
  - Businesses
  - Governments
  - Nonprofits
  - Hospitals
  - Schools
- Immigrant services and integration are gaining momentum



# Montgomery County's **LEP Policy**

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A countywide policy initiated by then County Executive and the Chief Administrative Officer in **March 2003**:

"It is the policy of the Montgomery County Executive Branch that departments, agencies and programs **take reasonable steps** to provide equal access to public services for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP)."



# Legal Basis of LEP Policy

## --Federal and State Laws & Guidelines on LEP

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### **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964**

- Prohibits discriminating based on race, color or **national origin**

### **Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1975**

- Mandates language assistance if 5% or 10,000 people of voting age from a single language group are LEP

### **Executive Order of 2000 by Bill Clinton**

- Requires all federal agencies to establish LEP guidelines and issue guidelines to funding recipients for compliance with Title VI

### **Maryland Equal Access to Government Services Act of 2002**

- Requires all state agencies to translate vital documents if 3% of population form a language group is LEP



# How to Determine “reasonable steps?”

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- Use four-factor steps provided by Dept. of Justice to determine “reasonable steps to ensure equal access:”
  1. Number or proportion of LEPs likely served
  2. Frequency of interaction
  3. Nature of work
  4. Resources available and costs



# Montgomery County's **Language Access Framework**

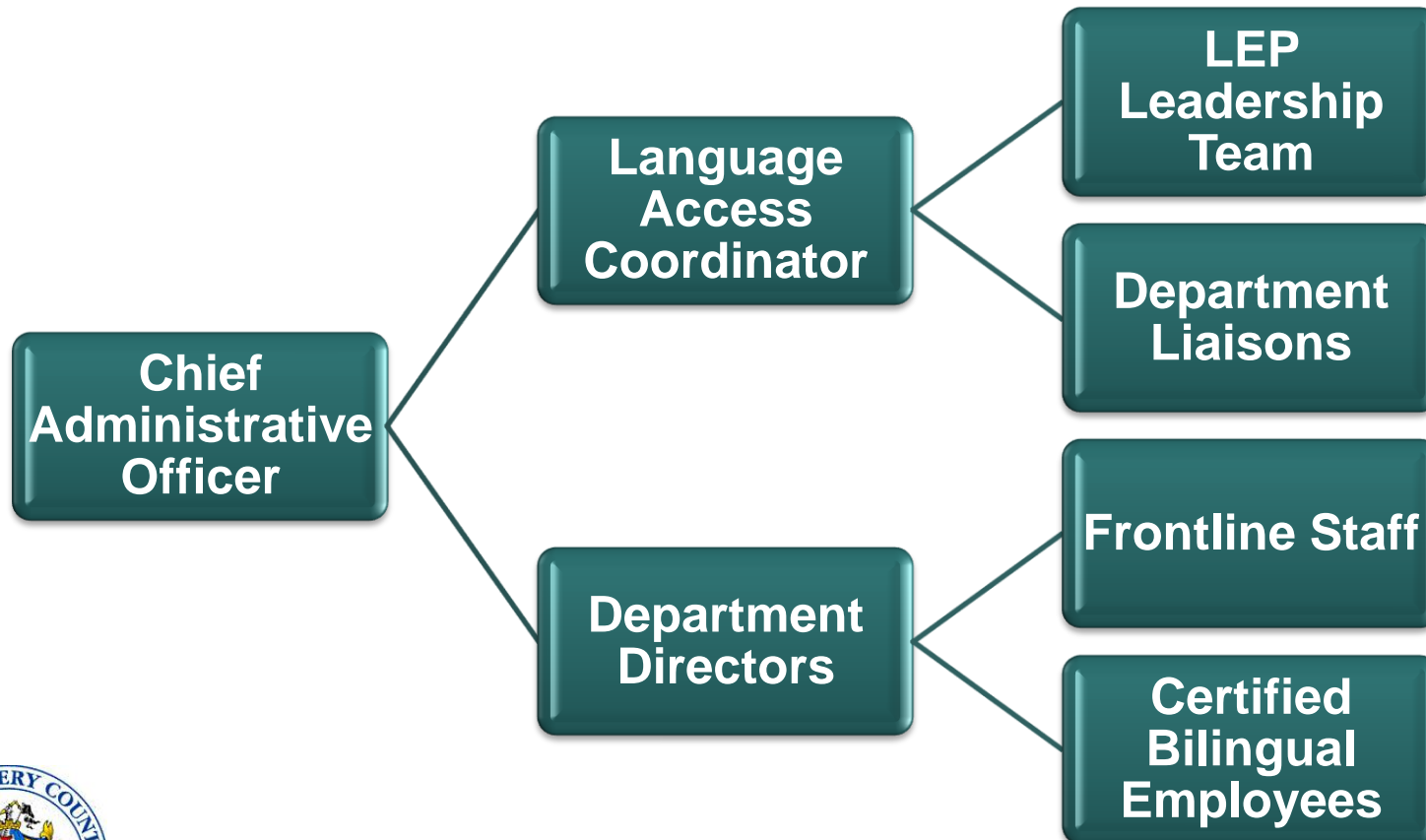
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- LEP policy
- Leadership team and Dept. Liaisons
- Department compliance framework
- Translation and interpretation resources
- Staff training
- Evaluation



# Organizational Structure (direct involvement)

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# Parties and Responsibilities

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# Parties and Responsibilities

## (continued)

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**LEP  
Leadership  
Team**



**Cross-agency issues with overall impact such as HR policy on certified employees, budgeting, technology, data collection, etc.**

**Department  
Liaison**



**Department's compliance with LEP Policy through planning, execution, and communication.**

**Frontline Staff**



**Assisting LEP customers using language resources if necessary.**

**Certified  
Bilingual  
Employees**



**Providing interpretation and translation services.**



# Offices/Depts Involved (indirect involvement)

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- Office of the Chief Administration Officer
- Human Resources:
  - Staff training
  - Testing and certifying bilingual employees
- CountyStat
- Department of Technology Services
- Public Information Office
- County Attorney's OfficeOffice of Human Rights



# Dept. Language Access Plan

## --10-point Compliance Checklist

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1. Department Liaison
  2. Baseline Self-Assessment
  3. Language Access Plan
  4. Language Resources for Translation & Interpretation
  5. Translation of **Vital Documents**
  6. Budgeting
  7. Public Communication of Language Accessibility
  8. Staff Training and Competency Development
- Evaluation and Language Assistance Measures:  
Data Collection and Reporting



# Staff Training

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Two training courses offered quarterly by HR:

- **Mandatory training** on LEP (3 hours)
  - LEP Policy and cultural awareness
  - Includes demographics, policy, resources, and cross-cultural communication
- **Interpreter training** for certified bilingual employees (all-day)
  - Ethics and techniques



# Translation vs. Interpretation Requirements

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- **Translation:**

- For written documents
- Requirements—vital documents or as needed

- **Interpretation:**

- Oral communication from one language to another
- Requirements—any language, any time



# Language Resources for Interpretation and Translation

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- **Internal resources**

- Certified Bilingual Employees
- Volunteer Center Language Bank

- **External (contracted) resources:**

- LLE Link—over the phone interpretation
- Language Assistance firms—3 contractors for translation and in-person interpretation services



# Language Resources Overview

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/LanguageAccess](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/LanguageAccess)

Resource	Translation	Interpretation	Costs	How to Access
<b>Certified Bilingual Employees</b>	Yes (limited)	Yes	Internal Resource	List online, need to arrange beforehand
<b>Volunteer Center Language Bank</b>	Yes	Yes	Internal Resource	Database online
<b>Language Assistance Vendors</b>	Yes	Face-to-face interpretation by appointments	Hourly rate for interpretation (about \$60/hr.)	Below \$5,000 can use invoice
<b>Telephone Interpretation (LLE Link)</b>	No	Over-the-phone interpretation 24/7 year-round	\$1.23 per minute	Call 1-800-234-0780 and use dept access code



# Using Families and Friends

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- Generally discouraged, should **NOT** be considered a language resource
- **Problems** with using families and friends:
  - Conflict of interest
  - Incompetency (untrained interpreters)
  - Confidentiality and sensitivity of subject
- **Scenarios: “Childhood in Translation” (video)**





# Community Partnership & Input

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- County Executive's Ethnic Advisory Groups
  - Asian Pacific
  - Middle Eastern
  - Latino/Hispanic
  - Caribbean
  - African
  - African American
- Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL)
- Immigrant-serving organizations like APA Legal Resource Center



# Elements of Improvement

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- **Better communication—internal and external:**
  - Language ID posters and boards, web sites, updates, community partners
- **Better support for departments:**
  - Translation management
- **More efficient use of language resources:**
  - Certified bilingual employees
- **Greater accountability and enforcement:**
  - Assessment, planning and evaluation
  - CountyStat measures and complaints process
  - Complaints process
- **New and improved training for all levels:**
  - Frontline staff, managers, 311 operators, etc.



# Challenges

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- Lack of budget
- Lack of understanding of urgency
- Misperceptions about LEPs
- Lack of data
- Lack of proven models



# Keys to Success

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- **A**ccountability
- **B**uy-in
- **C**ommunication
- **D**ata collection
- **E**valuation



# Contacts and Resources

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**For Translation or Interpretation Assistance:**

County Language Access Web site:

**[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/LanguageAccess](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/LanguageAccess)**

**For General Language Access Issues of Policy:**

**[LEP@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:LEP@montgomerycountymd.gov)** (Lily Qi)

